

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) Private network apparatus for connecting a user to an external internet comprising:

a plurality of security service pathways each providing a respective combination of security service features;

a service selection dashboard allowing said user to select from a plurality of security service features for user traffic to and from said user;

a network management server coupled to said service selection dashboard for storing a subscriber configuration in response to said user selected security service features;

a pass-through router for coupling said user traffic to said external internet independently of said security service pathways;

a service selection gateway coupled to said user for directing said user traffic to and from one of said service selection dashboard, said pass-through router, or one of said security service pathways; and

a security service router for coupling said plurality of security service pathways to said external internet;

wherein said service selection gateway directs said user traffic to said service selection dashboard if said subscriber configuration is in an initialized state; and

wherein said service selection gateway directs said user traffic to a respective one of said security service pathways or to said pass-through router in response to said subscriber configuration after initialization by said service selection dashboard.

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a firewall.

3. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a virus scanner.

4. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a content filter.

5. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a firewall and a content filter.

6. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a firewall and a virus scanner.

7. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a content filter and a virus scanner.

8. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least one pathway having a firewall, a content filter, and a virus scanner.

9. (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said security service pathways include at least two pathways having firewalls, said firewalls respectively providing different grades of firewall protection.

10. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 comprising three security service pathways each including a respective firewall, said firewalls including a first firewall providing a high grade firewall protection, a second firewall providing a medium grade firewall protection, and a third firewall providing a low grade firewall protection.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said low grade firewall protection comprises port blocking for outgoing traffic.

12. (original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said medium grade firewall protection comprises port blocking for incoming and outgoing traffic.

13. (original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein said high grade firewall protection comprises port blocking for outgoing traffic and blocking of all incoming traffic not initiated by said user.

14. (currently amended) A method of providing security service in a network interface to an external internet, said method comprising the steps of:

directing a user to a captive portal;

presenting security service features to said user;

storing a subscription profile for said user in response to security service features selected by said user through said captive portal;

receiving user traffic from said user destined for said external internet at a service selection gateway;

determining from said subscription profile which security service features to apply to said user traffic;

if said subscription profile for said user includes any security service features, then re-directing said user traffic to a particular security service pathway of a plurality of security service pathways, said particular security service pathway corresponding to said security service features identified by said user profile; and

if said subscription profile for said user includes no security service features, then re-directing said user traffic to a pass-through router ~~to~~ for coupling said user traffic to said external internet.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said security service features include firewall services, content filtering services, and virus scanning services, and wherein each of said security service pathways corresponds to a combination of said security service features.

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein said firewall services comprise selectable grades of firewall protection including a high grade firewall protection, a medium grade firewall protection, and a low grade firewall protection.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said low grade firewall protection comprises port blocking for outgoing user traffic.

18. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said medium grade firewall protection comprises port blocking for incoming and outgoing user traffic.

19. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said high grade firewall protection comprises port blocking for outgoing user traffic and blocking of all incoming traffic not initiated by said user.

20. (new) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

a user-side switch coupling said service selection gateway to said security service pathways; and

an internet-side switch coupling said security service pathways to said security service router.